

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0305

March 23, 2018

France A. Córdova
Director
National Science Foundation
2415 Eisenhower Avenue
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Director Córdova,

Since its foundation in 1950, the National Science Foundation (NSF) has played a vital role in the development of science and technology through basic research and education. The statutory mission of the NSF states the agency seeks "to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; and to secure the national defense." Your agency accounts for almost one-quarter of the nation's federally-issued university research funding and is bestowed with a budget of over \$6 billion.


In the previous Congress, many members outlined frivolous spending and grants issued by the NSF to questionable studies. After the American Innovation and Competitiveness Act's enactment, I understand that the agency took major steps to increase transparency under your leadership, and I applaud those efforts.

However, it has come to my attention that many facetious studies are continuing to receive taxpayer dollars. Last year, the NSF spent \$450,000 to study why there is no single English word for "light blue." \$330,000 was approved to study Tanzanian women's cell phone use and over \$123,000 was approved to study congressional "Dear Colleague" letters.

Studies should be consistent with our national interest, which includes increasing our economic competitiveness against other nations. The biological and chemical research that paves the way for medical advancement can increase the overall health and well-being of Americans, and falls in line with the mission statement. The development of the STEM workforce, along with increasing public scientific literacy would also benefit the nation's interests. Additionally, studies that promote partnerships with academic institutions and supporting national defense promote the national interest and the mission statement.

I want to continue seeing America as the world leader in scientific advancement and research, worthy of the world's envy. Given this, I implore you to promote the progress of science by only funding studies that are truly consistent with the Foundation's mission statement.

Sincerely,


Andy Biggs
Member of Congress